

Remarks

Summary

The rejected claims have been canceled and certain allowed claims have been amended to improve their form. Therefore, the application is now in allowable condition.

Status of the claims

Claims 13, 27, 32, 40, 44, and 49 have been amended to improve their form. Claims 1-8, 46, and 47 have been canceled without prejudice and Claim 49 has been amended so that it no longer depends from Claim 1. Accordingly, Claims 9-36, 39-45, and 48-51 are pending. Claims 9, 15, 23, 32, and 40 are independent.

Requested action

Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the outstanding rejections in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Allowable subject matter

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the allowance of Claims 9-36, 39-48, 49/9, 50, and 51.

Substantive rejections

Claims 1-3, 5-8, and 49/1 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by the patent to Azuma, et al. Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the patent to Azuma, et al. in view of the patent to Nagasue, et al.

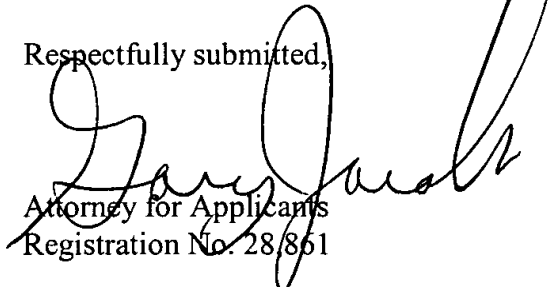
Response to substantive rejections

In response, while not conceding the propriety of the rejections, Claims 1-8 have been canceled without prejudice and Claim 49 has been amended so that it does not depend from Claim 1, thereby obviating the rejections.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the claims are now in allowable form. Therefore, early passage to issue is respectfully solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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